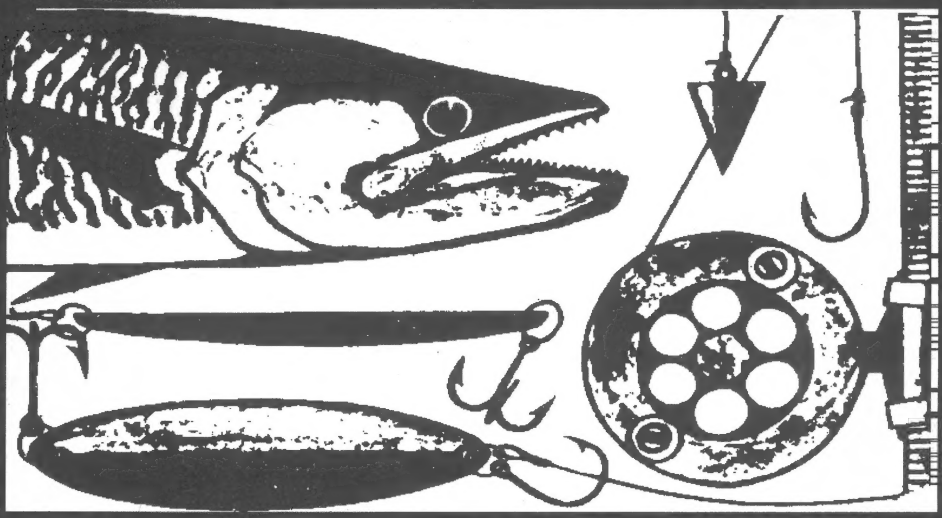
NATAL COAST



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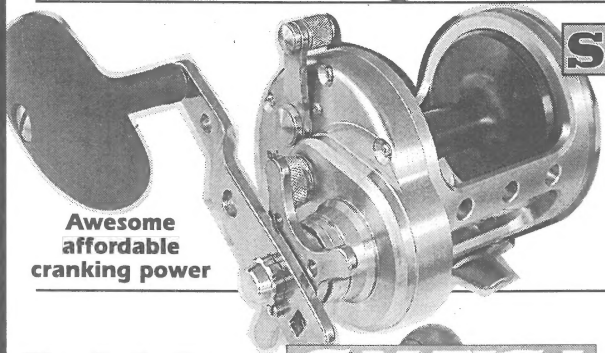

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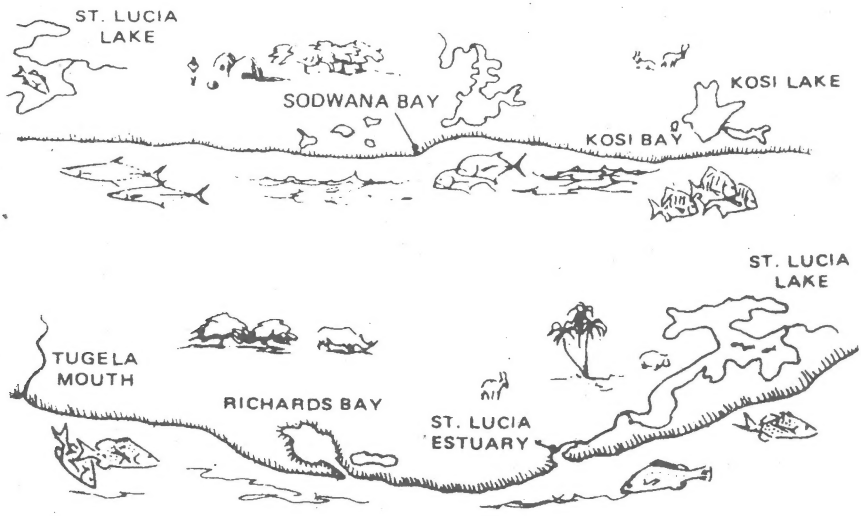
ZULULAND

The Zululand coast which stretches from the Tugela River mouth in the south to the Mozambique border in the north, is a sparsely populated area where there are few roads and most of the best fishing spots are accessable only after a long hike since the banning of four wheel drive vehices on beaches. All salt water anglers must have a current angler license. They are obtainable from all Coastal Post Offices and at the KZN Wildlife Offices.

These are the warmest waters we have and most of the fish are sub-tropical species such as grunter, pompano and barracouta, though there are cooler water species such as salmon (cob) and shad are still found here. In fact, the famous St. Lucia estuary and Lakes are almost as renowned for the catches of salmon taken they are as they are for the incredible grunter runs which occur from August to January each year. Fortunately for anglers the road as far as St. Lucia is escellent and it is only from here to Cape Vidal that things get really primitive.

The surf and rock fishing is excellent and many fine kingfish, pompano, grunter and stumpnose are taken, not to mention numerous tackle busters in the form of huge skate and sharks which are taken regularly by anglers using big fish baits. North of Vidal are many excellent spots to suit all tastes. All the lakes on this coast are a paradise for the light tackle angler as well as for the angler after big stuff with live bait. South of St. Lucia are such spots as Mtunzini and Richards Bay which have both surf and estuary fishing and scores of other fine surf and rock fishing spots.



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THE NATAL COAST

The Natal Coast boasts of being one of the finest angling areas in the world – with very good reason. An infinite variety of fish species are found off this stretch of coast, from cold water species such as galjoen, garrick, salmon etc. to the gamefish which the warm Mozambique current brings with it every summer – kingfish, barracouta, queenfish, grunter and surgeon etc. There is also the phenominal sardine run every June when shoals of these small fish are harried and pursued close inshore by large shoal of gamefish on their migration northwards.

Lagoons, estuaries, piers, jetties, rocks and deep-sea fishing are all within easy reach, where everyone can make a decent catch provided the right methods and equipment are used. To add to its charm tarred road make most of the fishing spots accessable and there are many fine hotels along the coast who welcome the visiting angler and his family.

The choice of an outfit make the difference between success and failure. The three most popular outfits used in Natal are as follows:

LIGHT: For 2.5 to 4.5 kg. nylon using 2,5m glass rod which tapers to the thickness of a match; it can be used with a small Scarborough reel or a fixed spool reel for fish such as shad, grunter, perch, springer and fish up to 4.5 kg or more when conditions permit.

MEDIUM: For 6.5 to 11 kg. nylon using a 2.5 – 3m rod which is capable of casting with a 57g sinker. The tip should be 5mm thick. Ideal for all round fishing from karranteen to barracouta this is the most versatile outfit and if only one outfit is to be used, this is it. It can be used with either a Scarborough, fixed spool or Yankee reel.

HEAVY: Consists of 2 – 300m of 13 – 20 kg nylon, the rod 3,5m tapering to 7mm at the tip and capable of casting sinkers up to 150g or lifting fish up to 3.5kg or more when conditions do not permit gaffing. For fish from 2 to 250 kg, this type of outfit is often used when shoal fish are feeding and the anglers are fishing in a bunch which does not permit the playing of a fish for any length of time.

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NORTH COAST

This section of our coast is at its best from August through to December, when Shad are present in their thousands. Spots such as Umhlanga, Tongaat Beach, Balito Bay, Umhlali, Salt Rock, Tinley Manor, Umvoti, Blythdale and Zinkwazi all have their turn during the season when anglers count their catches by the dozen as the fish take any bait that hits the water. These spots are also famous for the catches of garrick which follow the shad. A live shad allowed to swim beyond the breakers is almost a certain pickup but don't allow it to swim into the deep water unless you have the tackle to handle the "heavies" that hunt the outer reefs. During the rest of the year there is always something to catch – pompano, stumpnose, grunter, cod and salmon. In the numerous lagoons on this coast there are perch and rock salmon for the light angler. For best results fish on the high tide either at dawn or dusk.

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SOUTH COAST

Famous for the annual sardine run, excellent fishing is to be had along this stretch of coast throughout the year, particularly from May to November when shad, salmon, garrick, bronze bream and galjoen make up the bulk of the catches. Whenever the sardines or sprats come close in-shore they are followed by barracouta, kingfish, snoek, salmon bonito and many others. For best results fish either at dawn or dusk on the high tide.

A few of the best spots include Isipingo, Amanzimtoti, Warner Beach, Winkelspruit, Umkomaas, Umgababa, Scottburgh, Kelso, Ifafa Beach, Pumula, Hibberdene, Umzumbe, Sunwich Port, the Sand Spit at Port Shepstone (very good salmon catches are made here) Orange Rocks, Uvongo, Trafalgar, Margate, Munster and Port Edward.

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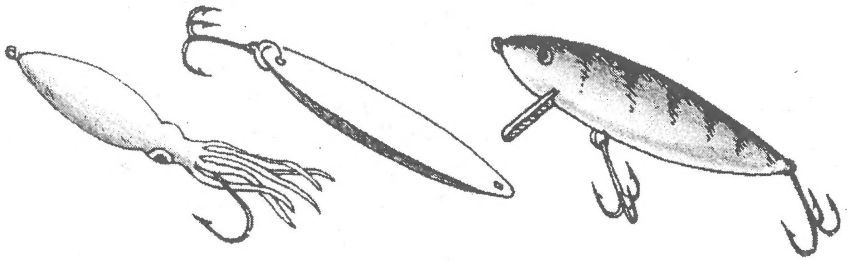

These, fished correctly and under the right circumstances can bring results equal and sometimes better than fresh bait. Mainly constructed of hard plastic, metal or soft flexible plastic they range in weight from tiny coloured and transparent squid and shrimps which need the addition of lead to cast out and reach an appropriate depth, to moulded white-metal spoons or jigs weighing 125 gm or more, when the target fish are tuna, mackerel or kingfish feeding beyond the surfline. They are all made with the object of having a fish believe that here is a tasty morsel worth chasing and some lures of the spoon or swimming plug variety have a built in action when retrieved at a certain speed but this varies with each different model and only experimentation in a clear, calm water environment such as a rock or a swimming pool will enable one to judge the correct retrieve for each individual lure. Other lures, which includes most of the soft plastics which usually capture nature in a very realistic manner need us to impart a natural motion to them such as an extremely slow retrieve along the bottom for a crab or the fast, erratic motion of a squid or a prawn along the surface or midwater. Whatever your target fish, choose a lure that mimics it's natural food and learn to retrieve it in the place, time and manner the fish would find acceptable and last but not least have faith in whatever you are fishing with, anticipate a strike at every turn of the reel.

The following are some methods of retrieve that have brought successful results, but remember nothing is carved in stone and experimentation is the key to success. Squid and shrimp need an erratic retrieve best imparted by flicking the tip of the rod with each turn of the reel. For bottom dwelling creatures such as crabs two or three winds followed by a stop for a second or two and then another few winds. In this case a strike usually occurs at the commencement of the retrieve after a stop. Sometimes fish can be induced to strike a metal jig or spoon when retrieved across the surface at high speed with the rod tip held high in the air so that the lure bounces across the surface, this often works for high speed gamesters such as kingfish and garrick. The same lure allowed to sink to a sandy bottom where there are a few rocks to snag on can be bounced along in a slow erratic retrieve which often entices cob or any other bottom feeders to strike. One point to remember is that if a jig or spoon spins with a propeller-like action as it is retrieved it is far less likely to induce a strike than one which has a wriggling motion and usually this is the result of too fast a retrieve for that particular lure. Jigs with sharp edges and a flat top generally work better with a fast erratic retrieve while those with blunt or rounded edges and slightly curved top require a slower steadier speed to bring out the best action.

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HINTS TO ANGLERS

Contact the Kwazulu-Natal Conservation Service 031-205 1271 for full details regarding bag limits and bait regulations or write to: Seafisheries, Private Bag X2 Roggebaai 8012. Tel: 021 - 402 3911.

Leave fishing spots clean – please help to conserve our natural resources.

Always consider your fellow angler when he is playing a fish.

Test your line before you begin to fish. Never have less than 100m on your reel.

Before casting make sure sinker or spoons are tied on securely.

Take a precautionary look around before casting and make sure you are not going to hit anyone.

Be ultra careful when walking over wet rocks or concrete and other places that are covered with algae.

Before fishing from rocks watch where you intend to fish for at least five minutes and note where and how often the waves break over them. Try not to turn your back on the sea when fishing from such places.

Never use a bait knife to clean a fish you intend to eat.

Protect your fish from drying out by burying them in the wet sand above high water mark.

Keep bright lights off the water when fishing at night time.

Don't immerse reels in sea water as it will damage the working parts.

Always carry a small wet-stone to sharpen hooks which should be checked before fishing.

The best time to fish is early morning or evening at high tide.

Before fishing with a spoon always polish up to a bright shine by scraping with the edge of a knife or by rubbing in the wet sand. Don't scrape a copper or brass-spoon, they can be polished up with Brasso before-hand or rubbed in the wet sand.

Make sure you have a firm footing before casting.

To gain some distance when casting with a light drift bait, wrap a small stone in a piece of tissue paper and attach to the line with cotton. The water will soon dissolve the paper.

Endeavour to wind your nylon on the reel evenly and maintain a slight pressure when retrieving.

Keep hooks and wire in tins which have a little oil in them. Always wipe clean before using.

Undersized fish must be returned to the water, try to do this without injuring more than necessary. Wet your hands before handling them.

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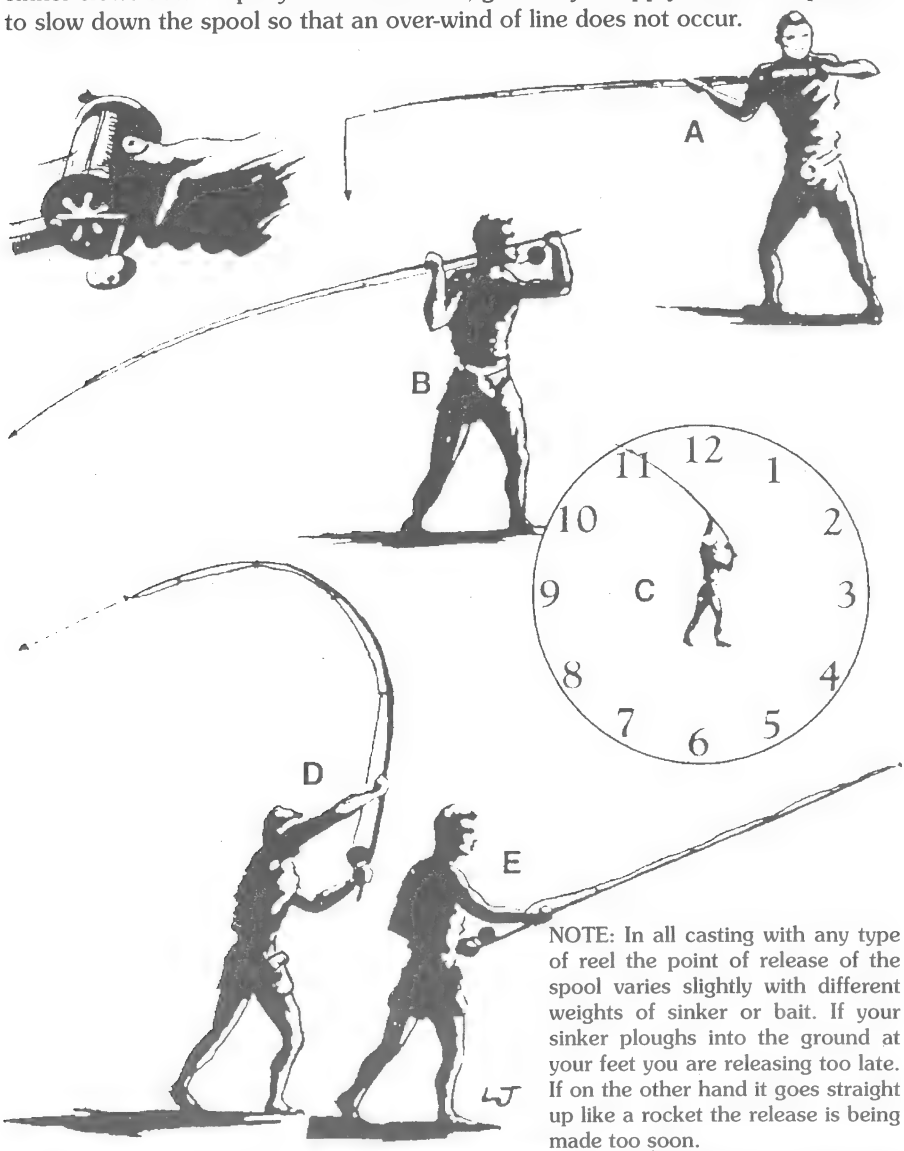
YANKEE REEL

Sinker should be 45cm from the rod tip. Hold the edge of the spool with the right thumb, then disengege the spool of reel from the winding mechanism with the left hand. Now place yourself in position (A). Swing the sinker away from you until it reaches the horizontal then begin the cast as illustrated. Release the pressure on the spool at about 11 o'clock position and follow through. Since the sinker slows down rapidly after its release, gradually re-apply the thumb pressure to slow down the spool so that an over-wind of line does not occur.



NOTE: In all casting with any type of reel the point of release of the spool varies slightly with different weights of sinker or bait. If your sinker ploughs into the ground at your feet you are releasing too late. If on the other hand it goes straight up like a rocket the release is being made too soon.

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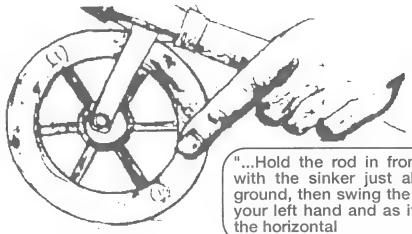
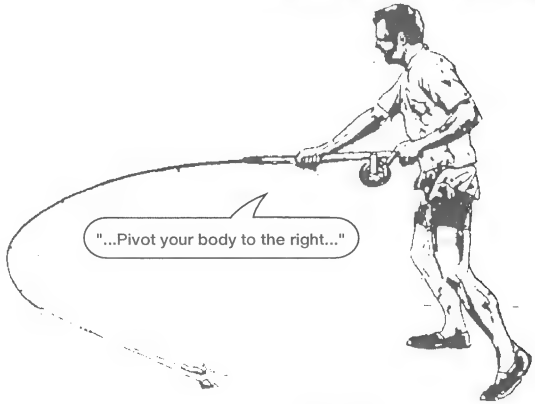
CASTING WITH A SCARBOROUGH REEL



"Stand with your back in the direction in which you intend to cast, holding the drum stationary with your left index finger like this..."

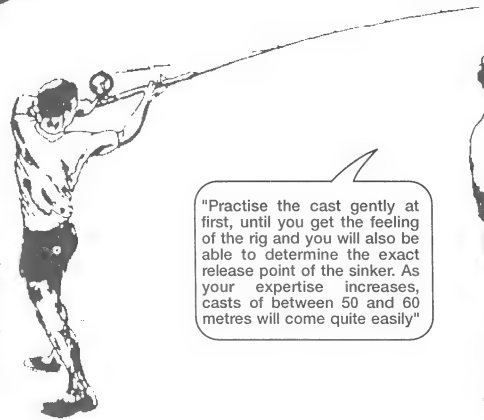
"...Hold the rod in front of you with the sinker just above the ground, then swing the sinker to your left hand and as it reaches the horizontal



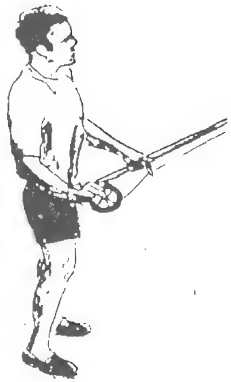
"...Pivot your body to the right..."

"...Bring the rod over your left shoulder and release the pressure on the reel as you do so, but don't at any stage take your finger away completely."

"Then follow through with the rod so that it points toward the target area. Remember to watch your reel, rather than the sinker, and apply finger pressure on the drum as the sinker slows down so that the nylon will not over wind."



"Practise the cast gently at first, until you get the feeling of the rig and you will also be able to determine the exact release point of the sinker. As your expertise increases, casts of between 50 and 60 metres will come quite easily"



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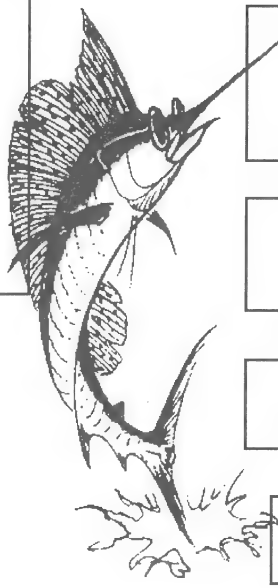

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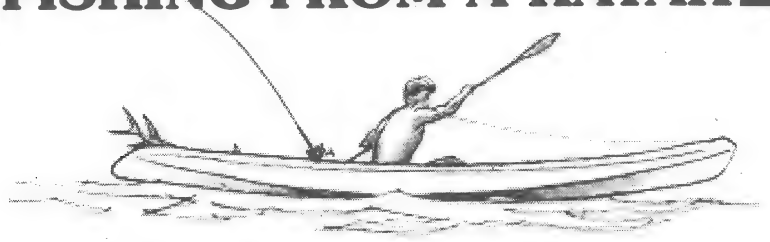
FISHING FROM A KAYAK



Fishing from a kayak offers the angler many of the advantages of boat fishing but eliminates the dependancy on other people since they can be launched and operated by one person. It affords the angler fast transport to and from productive areas which are often long distances apart and far out of the range of anyone casting from the shore.

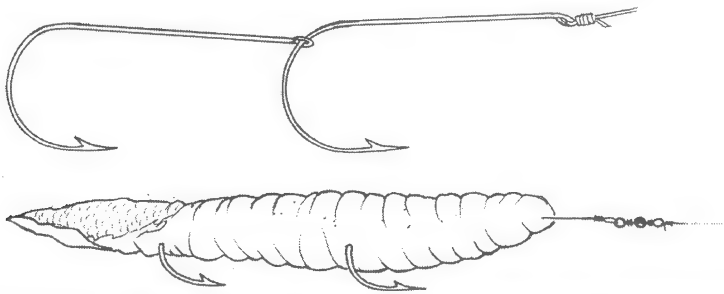
The usual one man craft are about three and a half to four metres long, weighing between 20 to 25 kgs in weight and .75 metres wide, which gives good stability and a great turn of speed. Choose one with internal stowage especially if operating through the surf where a deck cluttered with boxes, anchors and anchor line is a recipe for disaster.

Rods should be secured with velcro straps whether going our or returning to the beach no matter how calm the sea. No matter how good a swimmer you are a minimum safety precaution would be to wear a life-jacket. I have converted a foldable golf bag carrier into an ideal carrier for a kayak, which may sound light weight at a mere 25kgs, but if a car is parked a few hundred metres from the launch site the kayak feels like a ton by the time you reach the beach, especially in a strong wind.

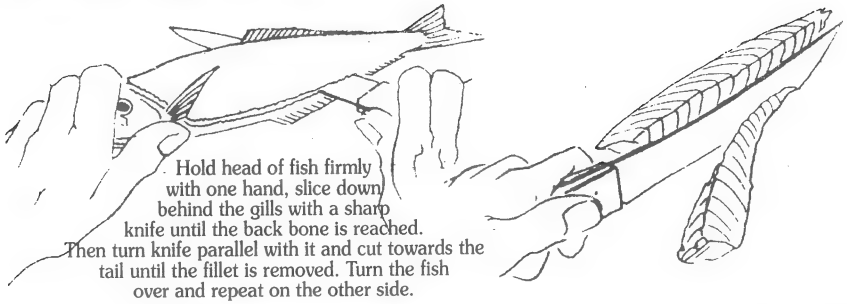
As for the nuts and bolts of handling a kayak this is covered in two excellent books. Fishing On Skis and Kayaks by Barry Wareham and A Practical Guide To Sea Kayaks by Johan Loots. Excellent publications which no beginner should be without.

TANDEM HOOKS

Using two or more hooks in Tandem can be very effective when using a long fillet bait. Use a pair of pliers to twist the eye of the front hook just enough to admit the point and barb of the second hook through it and then twist it back to its original position. The eye of the leading hook can be used with or without steel trace, though the less wire used the better especially for cob.



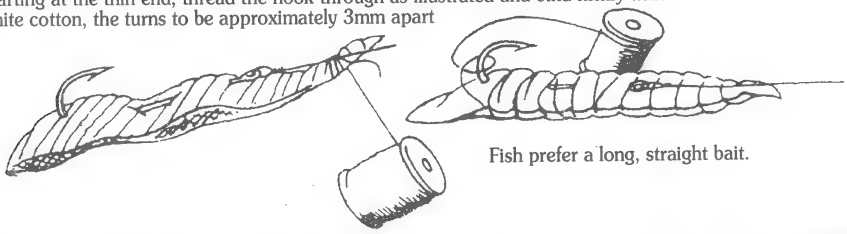
FILLET BAITS



Hold head of fish firmly with one hand, slice down behind the gills with a sharp knife until the back bone is reached. Then turn knife parallel with it and cut towards the tail until the fillet is removed. Turn the fish over and repeat on the other side.

Place the fillets skin-side down on a flat surface and cut lengthwise into strips, the length and width of which depends on the size bait required.

Starting at the thin end, thread the hook through as illustrated and bind firmly with white cotton, the turns to be approximately 3mm apart



Fish prefer a long, straight bait.

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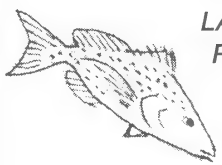

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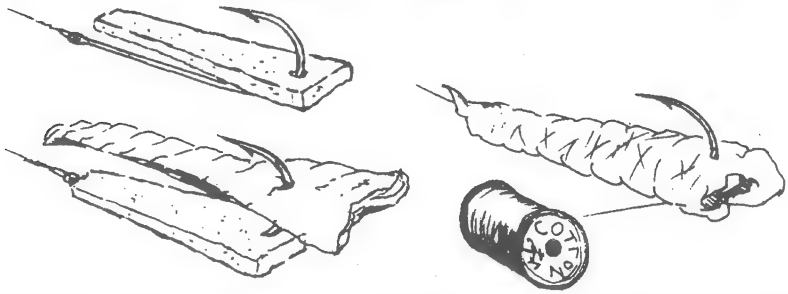
FOAM CHIP BAITING

To make your bait more visible to passing fish, a thin strip of plastic foam inside your bait will keep it off the sea-bed at trace length above your sinker allowing it to bob about enticingly in the currents. Scrap packaging from electrical appliances etc. can be cut up to suitable size at home prior to your fishing trip. If a whole dead fish is used as bait then foam can be pushed down the mouth or inserted into the stomach cavity which must then be stitched up securely.

Finally, please don't discard these strips or your plastic bait packets into the sea or leave them on the beach to pollute the environment.

Foam slice should be a little longer than the hook.

Push hook point through foam and let it lie along the shank.



Do the same with your fillet but make sure it overlaps the foam each end and is wide enough to wrap around the foam.

Envelope the foam with the bait, making sure that the barb and top curve of the hook are well clear of the bait then bind securely with cotton.

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Model	Total Length	Guides	Tackle Rating	Line Rating
CQXP 400/3	4.33 metre	Fuji BUOG	250 g	21 kg
CQXP 400/2	4.33 metre	Fuji BNOG	180 g	20 kg
CQXP 400/1	4.33 metre	Fuji BNOG	120 g	15 kg
CQXP 400/0	4.33 metre	Fuji BUOG	90 g	8 kg
CQXP 350/0	3.83 metre	Fuji BUOG	90 g	8 kg
CQXP 350/1	3.83 metre	Fuji BUOG	120 g	15 kg
CQXP 350/2	3.83 metre	Fuji BUOG	180 g	20 kg
CQXP 350/3	3.83 metre	Fuji BNOG	250 g	25 kg
CQXP 350/4	3.83 metre	Fuji BNOG	300 g	27 kg
CQXP 350/5	3.83 metre	Fuji BNOG	350 g	30 kg
CQXP 300/1	3.33 metre	Fuji BUOG	90 g	8 kg
CQXP 300/2	3.33 metre	Fuji BNOG	120 g	15 kg
CQXP 300/3	3.33 metre	Fuji BNOG	150 g	17 kg

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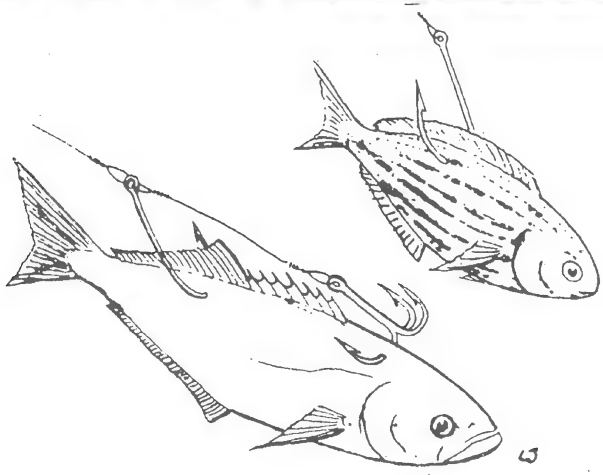
LIVE BAIT



When mounting a bait, be sure that the hook does not pierce any of the vital organs (spine etc.) Remember that it must be put on sufficiently well to withstand the strain of casting. The hook which carries most of the weight of the bait must be inserted closer to the tail than the head so that the live bait is able to swim in a slightly "head down" position. If a live-bait must be retrieved and cast out again, wind it back very slowly as the fish will drown if pulled rapidly through the water tail first.

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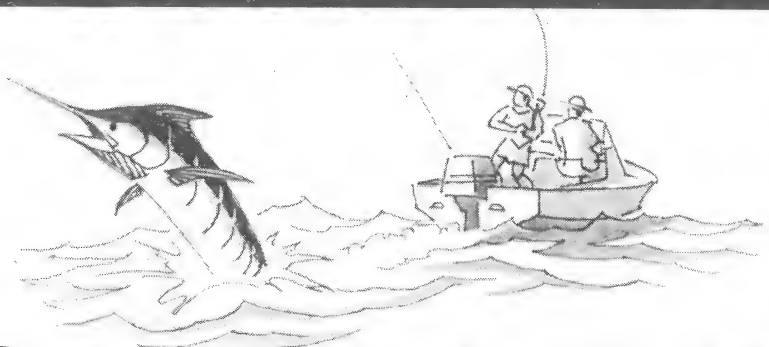

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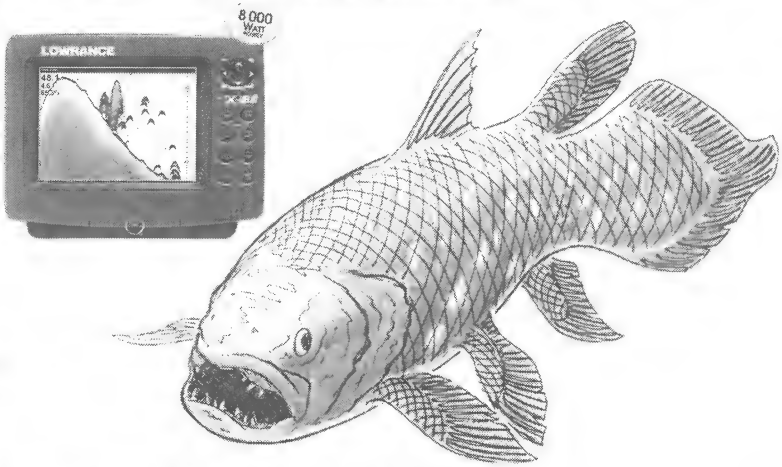

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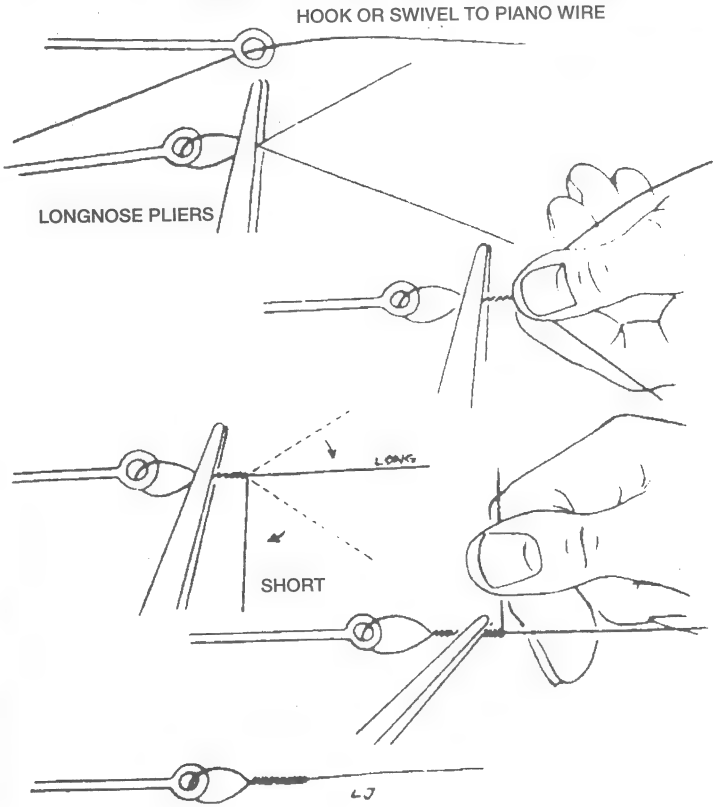
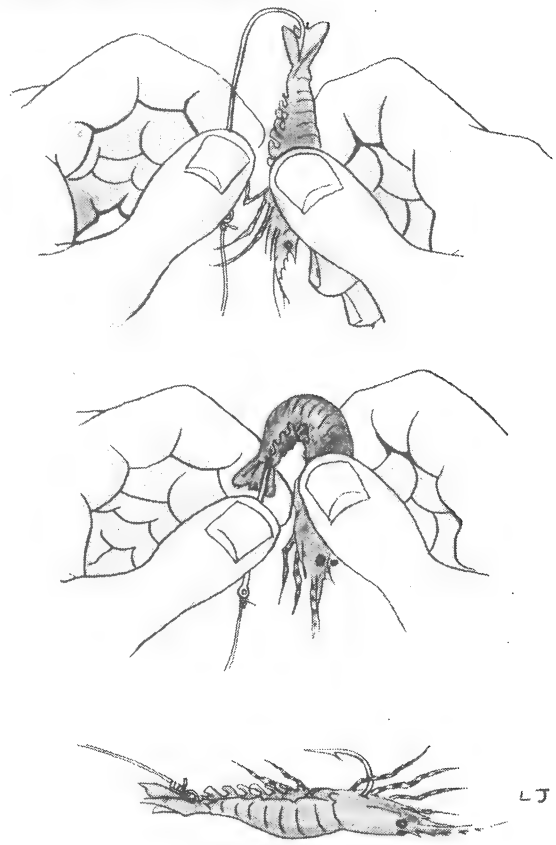


PRAWN BAIT



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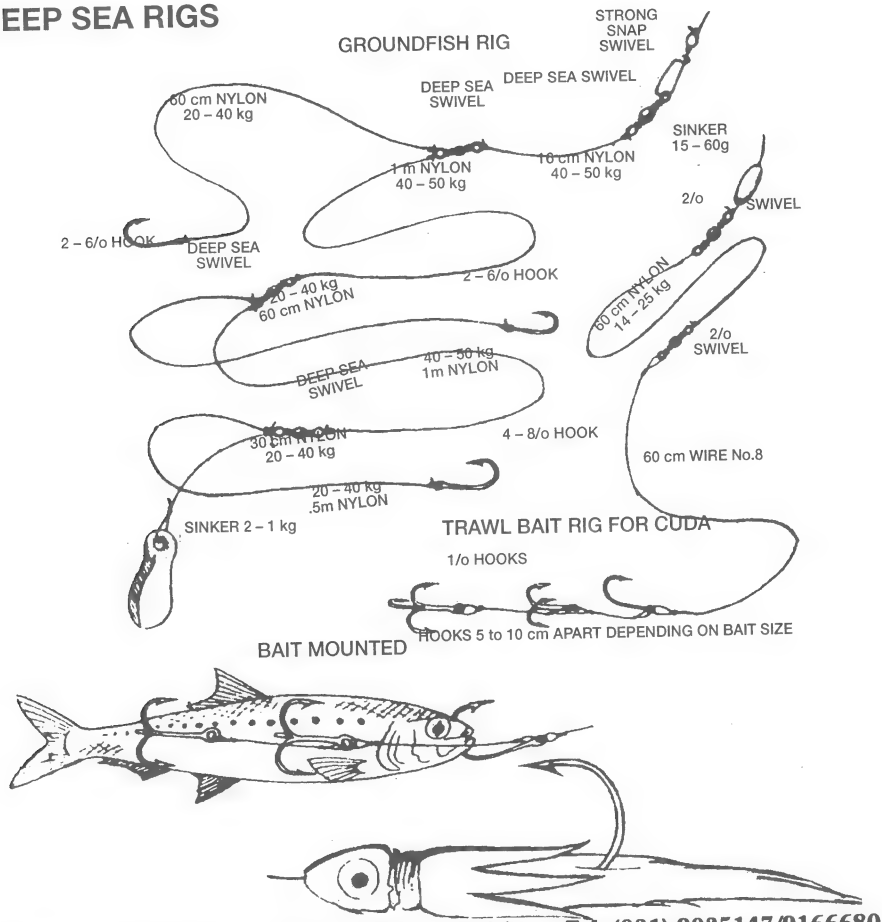
The cuda season starts in December and continues on and off through until June when the annual phenomenon the sardine run sends both fish and anglers completely crazy. During July the 74 are taken and cracker and salmon from October onwards.

DEEP SEA RIGS


GROUNDFISH RIG
STRONG SNAP SWIVEL
DEEP SEA SWIVEL
DEEP SEA SWIVEL
60 cm NYLON 20 – 40 kg
1 m NYLON 40 – 50 kg
16 cm NYLON 40 – 50 kg
SINKER 15 – 60g
2/o SWIVEL
2 – 6/o HOOK
DEEP SEA SWIVEL
20 – 40 kg 60 cm NYLON
2 – 6/o HOOK
60 cm NYLON 14 – 25 kg
2/o SWIVEL
DEEP SEA SWIVEL
40 – 50 kg 1m NYLON
30 cm NYLON 20 – 40 kg
4 – 8/o HOOK
60 cm WIRE No.8
20 – 40 kg .5m NYLON
SINKER 2 – 1 kg
TRAWL BAIT RIG FOR CUDA
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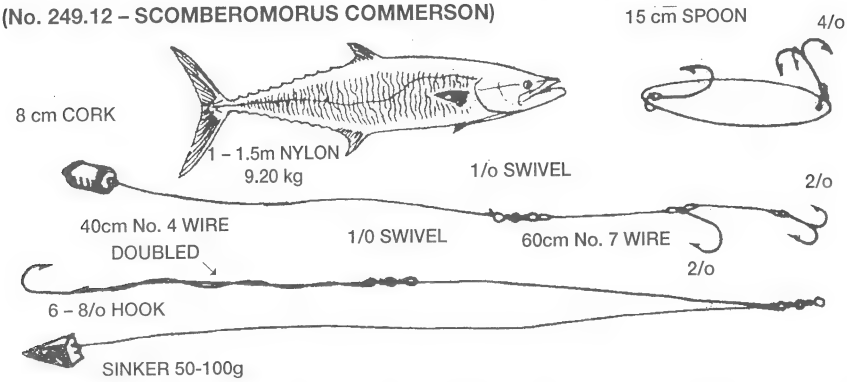
BARRACOUTA/KING MACKEREL

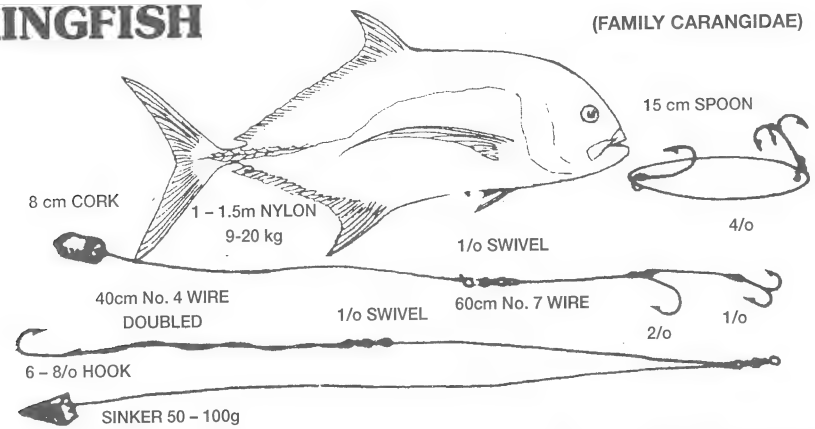
(No. 249.12 – SCOMBEROMORUS COMMERSON)



Averaging 6.5 – 9 kg. and usually found in water over 6m deep. In June and July during the annual sardine run on the South Coast they come close in-shore and are taken from the beaches and rocks. They hunt in shoals, bigger fish preferring to travel singly. The best time to fish for them is either early morning or late afternoon on the high tide. Shad or karranteen live bait are the most widely used though fresh whole bait or spoon will also be taken locally from piers & groynes, probably more are taken from the South Pier than all other sports combined. Coastal spots include Scottburgh, Umdoni Park, Umzumbe, Uvongo's Orange Rocks and other spots where there is deep water close inshore. When using a bottom rig insert a piece of styrafoam into the bait so that it floats above the sinker. Delicious eating. Bag limit 10.

KINGFISH

(FAMILY CARANGIDAE)



Numerous varieties of this fish inhabit our waters during summer. They feed on smaller fish – shad, sardine, karranteen etc. Live bait or artificial lures are mostly used but they will sometimes take a whole bait or fillet. For the smaller species shrimp or prawn fished as drift bait is hard to beat. Some of the best spots for kingfish include Tinley Manor, North and South Pier, Durban Bay, Clansthal, Scottburgh, Park Rynie, Kelso, Uvongo and anywhere the sardines appear. Fair eating. Minimum size allowed 150mm Bag limit 5.

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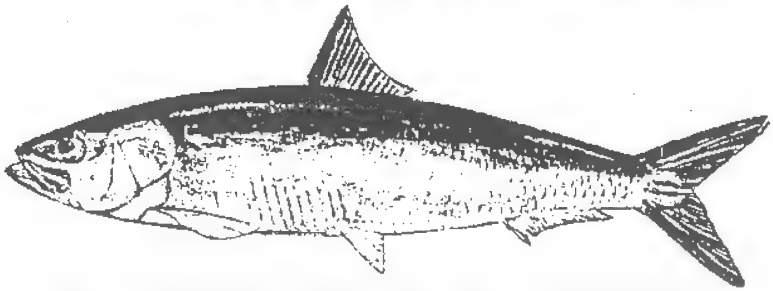

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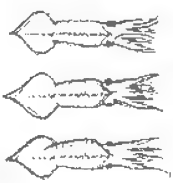

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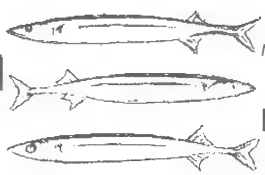

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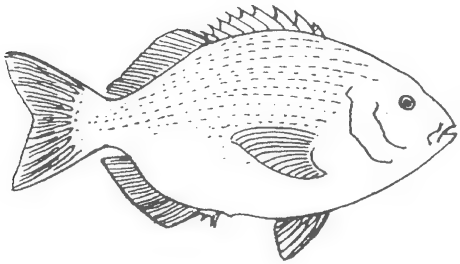
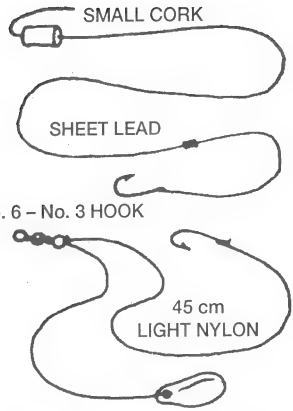
BRONZE BREAM

(No. 183.24 PACHYMETOPON GRANDE)



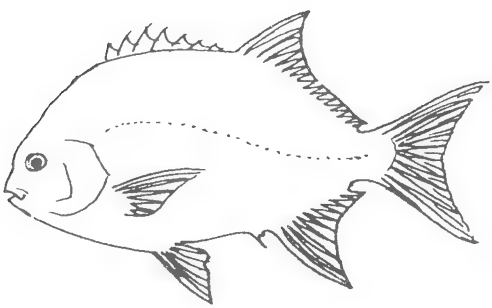


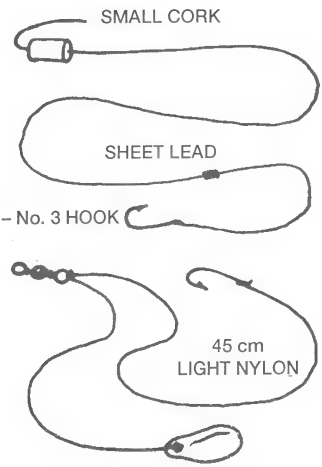
These are a resident reef-fish averaging 1 – 5 kg. found throughout the year all along the coast. They browse on weeds and also eat small marine animals such as crabs and prawns. They swim singly or in shoals in water from 3 – 33m. They are shy feeders and light tackle brings the best result using either bottom or floating rig depending whether the fish are shallow, deep, near or far. Fresh crayfish is about the best bait though good results are also had on prawn and redbait. From Hibberdene to Port Edward there are many excellent spots for this fish. Season June to November.

The bronze bream is good eating. Minimum size allowed 30cm. Bag limit 2.

GALJOEN

(No. 187.1 CORACINUS CAPENSIS)





This fish is a cold water species, appearing in Natal waters at the end of winter. Abundant on the South Coast, especially Port Shepstone and Margate areas. It feeds in the foam on marine worms, weeds, crabs and other small marine animals. One of the finest baits for them is redbait. Fishing is best at high tide with rough water, casting into gullies close to shore or close to reefs or boulders further out. Season is from June to November. The season is closed 1 September – 30 November. Very rich meat. Minimum size allowed 350 mm. Bag Limit 2. Closed season 15 Oct – End of February.

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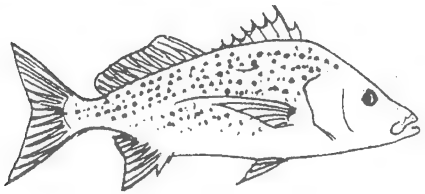
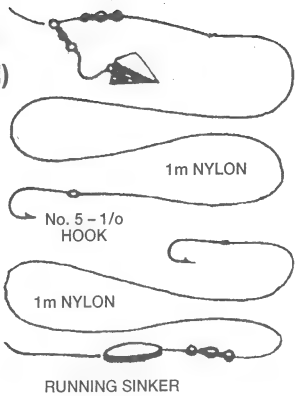
GRUNTER

(No. 170.10 – POMADASYS COMMERSONNI)





Grunter averaging 1 – 2 kg are caught all along the coast, though they are more abundant during the summer months. They can be caught throughout the year in the surf, bays and estuaries.

They sometimes come into very shallow water, feeding on shrimps and prawns in the protected areas and sealice and crustacea in the surf.

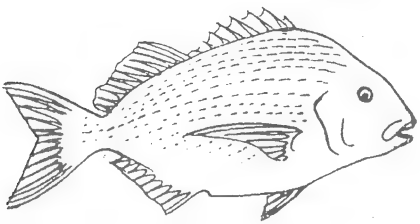
The lighter the tackle the more fish will be taken. The bite of the grunter is not usually a rushed affair but consists of a series of soft pulls as the fish takes the bait into its mouth and ejects it again quite forcefully. The strike must be delayed until a steady pull is felt otherwise you may be hitting at empty water.

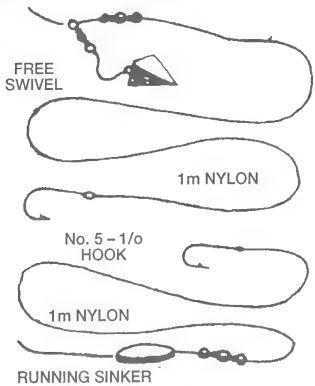
Favourite areas include Durban Bay, the Beach Front and all river mouths north and south. Minimum size allowed 400mm.

These fish are excellent fighters and make delicious eating. Bag limit 5.

STUMPNOSE

(No. 183.17 RHABDOSARGUS SARBA)





These fish average 1 – 2 kg and are found over sandy areas, usually where sealice and shrimp are found. Mainly a night feeder, the stumpnose at times moves into very shallow water (200mm or so) with the high tide.

A fine fighter on light tackle the best bait to use is shrimp, fish fillet, sardine sealice or crab.

Found off the sand banks of Durban Bay, the north side of Vetchie's Pier in fact at all the popular spots along the North and South coasts.

The Stumpie is excellent eating. Minimum size allowed 250mm. Bag limit 5.

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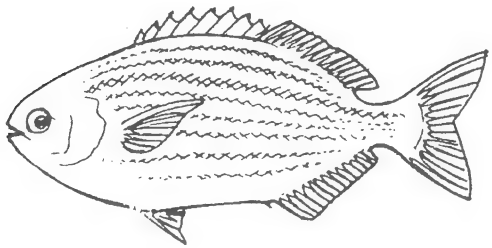
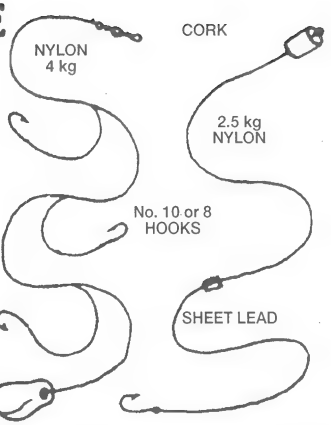
KARRANTEEN/STREPIE

(No. 183.39 SARPA SALPA)





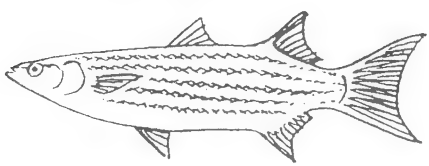
This is a small shoal fish averaging 11 – 19 cm. Abundant during the winter months, dense shoals of these fish in July are sometimes mistaken for sardines. Found in the shallows from the surf line to the waters edge. Wherever there are rocks watch for flashes as the fish feeding on the marine growth are surged backwards and forwards with the swell.

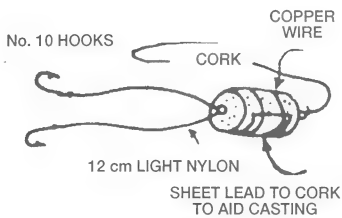
Using nylon of 2.5 – 4 kg. fish with a small float if the fish are close by or a Christmas Tree trace when they are far out or if the water is rough.

For bait use sardine – especially the intestines, craytail, shrimp or redbait. Mainly a bait fish the karranteen is edible. Minimum size allowed 150 mm. Bag limit 10.

MULLET

(FAMILY MUGILDAE)





Common throughout the year this is essentially a shallow water fish averaging .5 – 2 kg which inhabits bays, river mouths and lagoons where it feeds on organisms found on the mudbanks, reefs and floating on the surface of these sheltered localities. Minimum size allowed 150mm. A very shy fish it should be fished for with light tackle and since most species have very small mouths hooks should be of the smaller type. On locating such a shoal note the direction in which they are swimming and cast at least 10m ahead of them with the floating rig as shown below. For bait use fresh bread. DO NOT knead it to a dough and cast carefully otherwise it will fall off the hooks. The bait will usually float behind the cork and you can see the fish take it, do not strike hard and play the fish gentle as they have soft mouths. They will also take flying ants.

Often when there is a concentration of fishermen using float-bait for shad, mullet will start to feed off the baits and since they cannot swallow so large a hook a few will be landed, usually foul hooked. When this happens tie two small hooks onto 18 cm pieces of nylon and attach them to the bottom eye of the float, bait with sardine gut or scraps of fillet. Bag limit 50.

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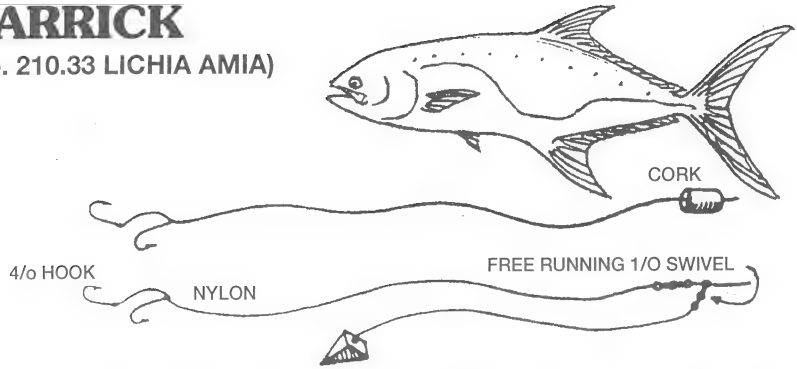
GARRICK

(No. 210.33 LICHIA AMIA)

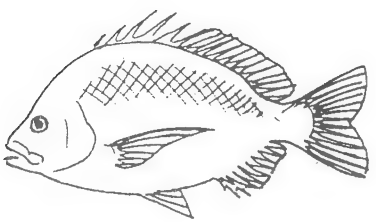


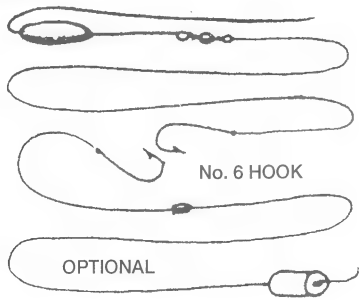
Averaging 6.5 – 12 kg. these fish travel in shoals northwards from May to October, late October and November they return south. They travel along the last line of breakers and enter the white-water to feed on shad, karranteen and mullet.

For best results use live-bait, and as garrick have no teeth use a heavy nylon trace. When fishing from piers or when the surf is calm use a float and cast into the outgoing current. Don't let the bait swim too far out, this applies especially to the piers where the deep water is close in. In rough water use live-bait on a ground trace. When spinning for Garrick use a 12 – 15 cm. flat spoon. Cast out as far as possible and holding the rod tip high begin to retrieve the spoon the moment it hits the water. Wind fast and keep the spoon bouncing along the surface – this will produce far more strikes than conventional spinning. Quite good eating. Bag limit 2. Minimum size allowed 70 cm.

PERCH / RIVER BREAM

(No. 183.1 ACANTHOPAGRUS BERDA.)





A small fish weighing up to 1 – 2 kg. but usually about 2 or 5 kg perch in habit estuaries, bays and lagoons, preferring to live under jetties among reeds or wherever there is protection from direct sunlight. Season throughout the year.

Best fished for very early morning or evening when shrimp, mincemeat, soft cheese or small crabs bring good results. Cast out (no sinker) parallel to the wharf moving along the bottom. This method results in far more than normal ground fishing.

When fishing with soft cheese it will stay on the hook longer if a little cotton wool is kneaded into it. Good eating. Minimum size allowed 250 mm. Bag limit 5.

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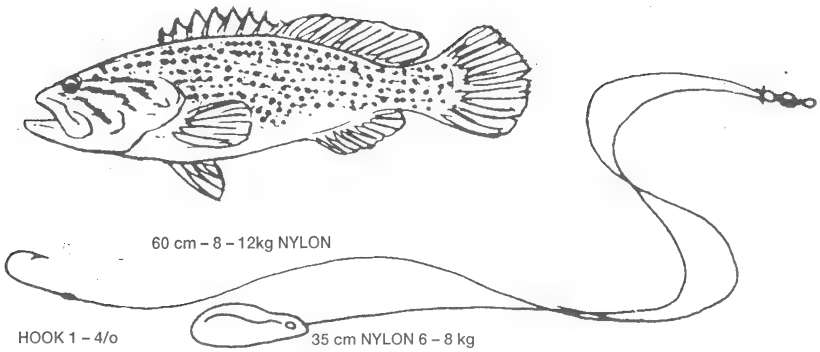
ROCKCOD

(FAMILY SERRANIDAE)



Wherever there are rocks and generally where the water is 4m or more, there will always be rockcod. This family of fish is represented by numerous species in Natal waters from the common spotted and yellow-belly cods averaging 1 – 2 kg. to the giant brindle bass of 120kg plus. They spend the whole of their lives, around, in and under the rocks.

Bait may be practically anything – fillet, livebait, craytail, sardine, crab. When fishing for them use reasonably stout tackle as playing the fish is out of the question. Be sure that the trace from swivel to sinker and swivel to hook is weaker than the rest of the rig so that when it is caught in the rocks only this part of the trace which is hooked up will be lost.

Excellent eating. Minimum size allowed 500mm. Bag limit 5.

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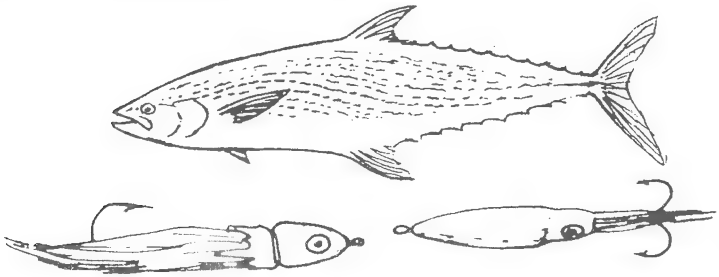
SNOEK / QUEEN MACKEREL

(No. 249.13 SCOMBEROMORUS PLURILINEATUS)



SMALL SPOON

A fine fighting fish on light tackle which averages 1 – 3 kg. and is caught from November to June off the Natal coast. Travelling in shoals usually just beyond the breaker line they are caught mostly on small artificial lures from piers, groynes or rocky promentaries where one is able to cast beyond the last line of breakers at high tide.

They take well on small fast moving lures such as spoons, artificial squid and feather lures. If using spoon the sharp edged type of brass or copper work best. These fish are found in water 5 – 10 m or more.

They are taken from all piers and groynes in Durban, the Umvoti River Mouth, Uvongo and Scottburgh. They are excellent eating. Bag limit 10.

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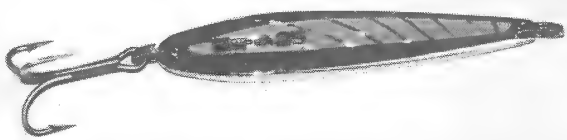

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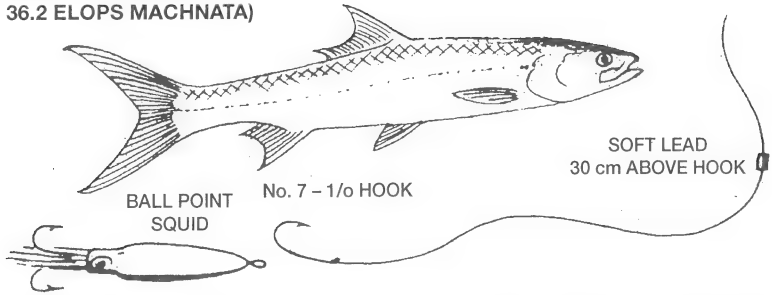
SPRINGER

(No. 36.2 ELOPS MACHNATA)

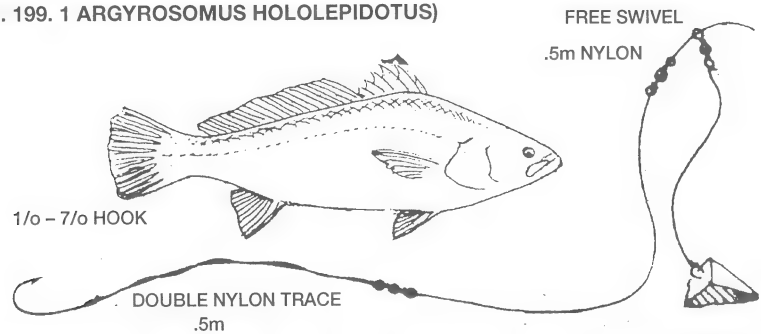


A summer gamefish averaging 1 – 2.5kg. which feeds at sunset and early evening at high tide in the calm waters of river mouths, lagoons and Durban Bay wherever the small baitfish congregate. Live bait is by far the best bait to use – mullet, prawns or glassies. As the fish feed on the surface it is advisable not to use a sinker though in a strong wind or current a small piece of sheet lead can be crimped onto the nylon if using less than 2.5kg. double the last foot or so. Allow the fish to move off with the bait before striking. Springer will also take a small spoon or artificial shrimp.

They are edible but very bony fish. Bag limit 5.

SALMON/KOB

(No. 199. 1 ARGYROSOMUS HOLOLEPIDOTUS)



The best season for these fish which average from 1 – 12kg. is from May to November. Spending the daylight hours in caves and deep gullies which are near the foam and especially where the water is discoloured near river mouths. Salmon usually come on the feed after dark, chasing bait fish into the shallows. Use a heavy nylon trace rather than steel and use as light a sinker as possible. When using live bait allow the fish a few moments to kill the bait and get it well into its mouth. They will take shad, karranteen or mullet, live or filleted – sardine or squid.

Some of the best spots are South Pier, Umgeni Mouth, The Sand Spit-Port Shepstone, Umkomaas, Tongaat River Mouth and Balito Bay. Minimum size allowed 600mm. Bag limit 1. Good eating.

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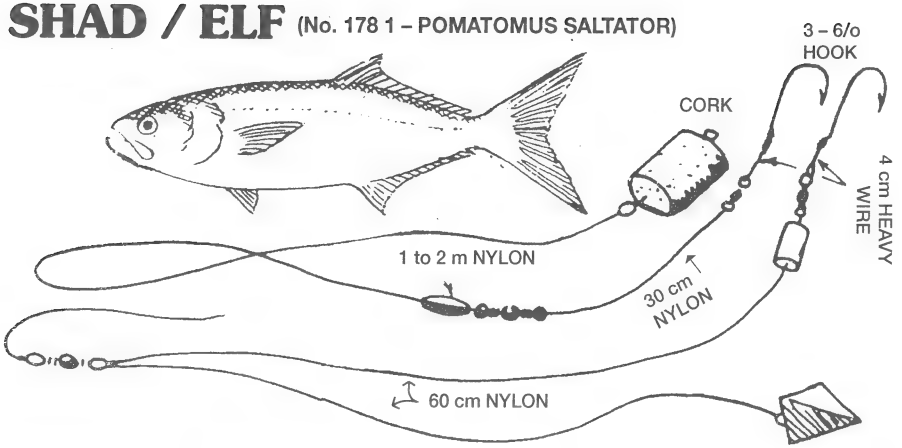
SHAD / ELF (No. 178 1 – POMATOMUS SALTATOR)



Averaging .5 – 1.5kg. these fish are abundant on our coast from June to December. There is a closed season 1st September – 30 November.

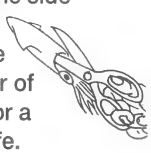
From June to October the shoals move in a northerly direction, keeping just within the surf line and moving into the shallows during high tide to feed on small fish. They have a mouthful of razor sharp teeth and for this reason it is essential to use a steel trace. However the wire should be kept as short as possible and should not extend beyond the top of the bait. They will take any fresh fillet bait. Excellent eating. Minimum size allowed 300mm – bag limit of 4 fish per day. Closed season 1st Oct – 30 Nov.

Excellent spots include Glenashley, Umhlanga, Tongaat Beach, Compensation, Salt Rock and Tinley Manor on the North Coast. South Coast spots are Inyoni Rocks, Amanzimtoti, Warner Beach, Park Rynie, Kelso, Turton, Pumla, Uvongo and many others.

PENCIL SQUID BAIT

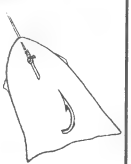
Pencil squid is a deadly bait for almost any fish. It is nost effective when rigged in the following manner.

1. First slit the side of the body tube with a pair of scissors or a sharp knife.



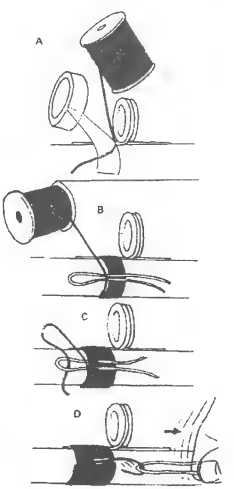
2. Open up the tube and lay it flat.

3. Place the head with the guts intact to one side and mount the body on to a 5/0 hook as shown.



4. Impale the head onto the hook with the guts towards the eye of the hook.
Roll the edges of the body under the hook so it is now inside out and secure with cotton as illustrated.

BINDING AN EYE ONTO A ROD



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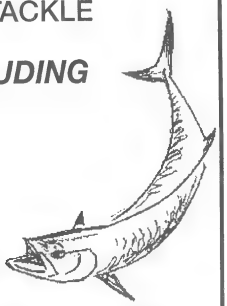

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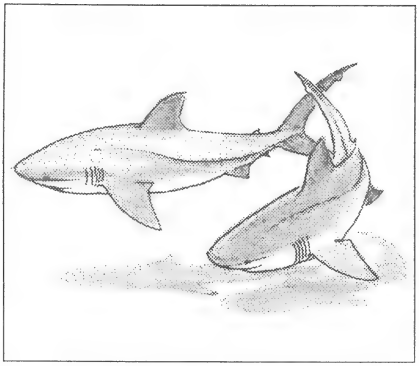

SHARK FISHING

Most people begin their fishing careers angling for the small species of rock fish which inhabit the gullies, bays, estuaries and other protected areas of our coast line. Depending on the individial and the amount of success experienced, the fisherman will either leave it at that or graduate to bigger and better fish such as the larger species of gamefish including cuda, queenfish, yellowtail and cob. Once having tasted success at this stage of the game, angling becomes to many of us more than a mere pastime but a way of life, and the deeper one delves into the sport, the more one realises that it is impossible to know all the answers, and it is this knowledge tht makes angling the fascinating sport that it is. Fortunately for us there are so many facets of fishing that differ so much from each other as to be as far apart as, say for instance, badminton from tennis. There is never any stage where one reaches such a state of perfecton that it becomes humdrum. If having fished in the surf for shad for a few months and suddenly one feels that the hooking and cranking out of fish after fish is beginning to pall then without too much effort you may turn in one or two directions to bring back the challenge and uncertainty that makes life worth living. First, one may go over to extremely light tackle which results in more skill and knowledge being required to take less fish, or in the other direction where one may send out one of the shad for live-bait for garrick, cob or other in-shore gamefish. If the latter is your choice and you persevere then you will most certainly take home some fine catches, but inevitably will come the day when the live-bait is picked up by some irresistible force which will peel your reel to the drum ad leave you, at the best, with a couple of hundred yards of nylon to wind back onto your reel or worse, with no line at all. It is usually after an experience like this that one decides that the time has come to give heavy tackle fishing a "go" and try to chalk up a couple of "whoppers" to satiate the Big Fish ego with which all anglers are inflicted sooner or later.

Fortunatly for salt water anglers, our coastal waters are inhabitated by some denizens which fill the bill to a "T". Namely about twenty different variety of shark, ranging from the innocent sand shark which varies in size from around the 27 – 45 kgs. mark, to the great maneater which is usually in the 135 – 225 kgs. class but which can be as big and bigger than the inshore record which was landed by Reg Harrison from the Durban South Pier and weighed – 720 kgs.

What is required of an angler who wishes to make a success of shark fishing? First one must have a good grounding of fishing ability, after all, one doesn't run before one can walk, secondly the mental asset of perseverance and to be physically fit. Last but not least one must use the correct tackle and methods to acquire any notable success. Anyone who attempts this facet of our sport without the above requirement is wasting his time and would do better to leave well alone.

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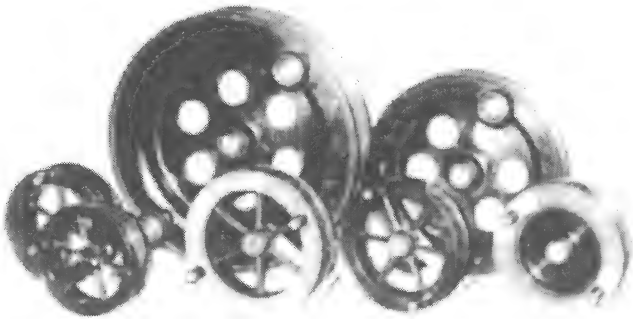

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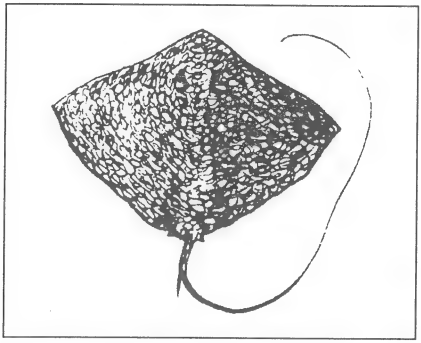
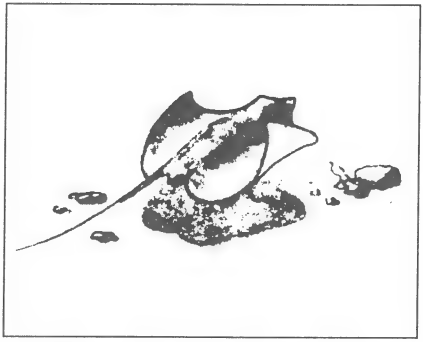
Tackle for shark fishing varies greatly with the different species being sought and venue which is to be fished and can roughly be divided into three categories. Surf and rock fishing where the bait is cast from the reel, kite-fishing where the bait is sent out by the wind and pier fishing where both these methods can be used, but which also includes the throw-bait method used by the pier shark fishermen after the ultra-heavies.

FISHING FOR SKATES & RAYS





These flat, odd looking bottom feeders are found in all our coastal waters, especially in the warmer areas from Natal northwards. Although closely related to the sharks they are totally different in appearance having flattened bodies which merge into the pectoral fins to form a disc shape which varies in outline according to the species. The mouth is situated under the head and is usually rather small. The teeth are rows of flat crushers, ideally suited for dealing with shellfish and crustaceans which form the principal diet of the skates and rays.

Most species move into very shallow water at high tide in search of food and therefore surf anglers cast onto the edge of the sandbanks rather than into the deep water itself when after skate. Fishing is best during the warm months of the year probably because this is when crabs, sea lice and other crustacea are most active in the shallows. Skates and rays will take almost any type of bait including whole or filleted fish, squid, cuttlefish and of course whole crab or crayfish. Some species such as the thorntail, honeycombe and diamond can weigh over 90 kg. and thorntail over 180 kgs. have been recorded. Although the sandshark is classified as a skate it is so outstanding an opponent that it has been dealt with separately.

An angler handling a skate or ray should take care not to get too near the tail, especially the base where many species have a vicious spike which can inflict a nasty wound. This weapon however is used only in self defence which is the right of every living creature and unless molested they are not in anyway dangerous to humans so that whenever possible most anglers return them to the water alive.

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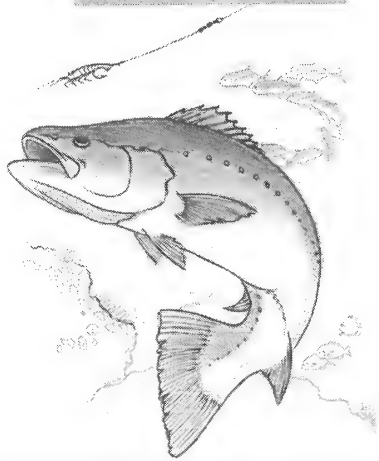

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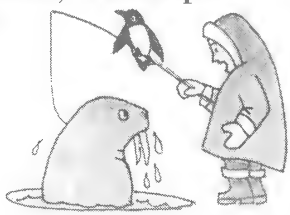

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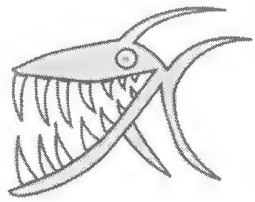

*ROCK * SURF * SKI BOAT * FISHING SKI'S * FRESHWATER*
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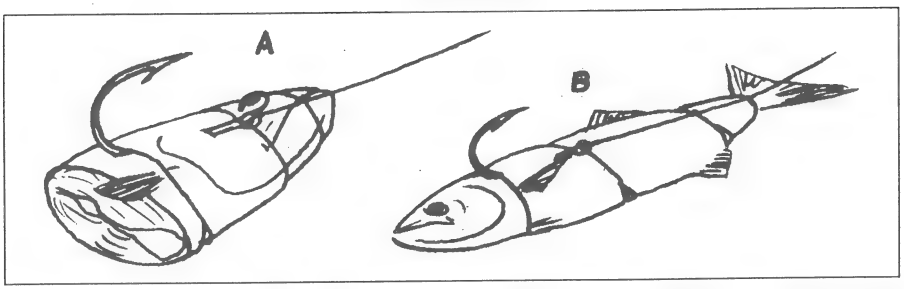
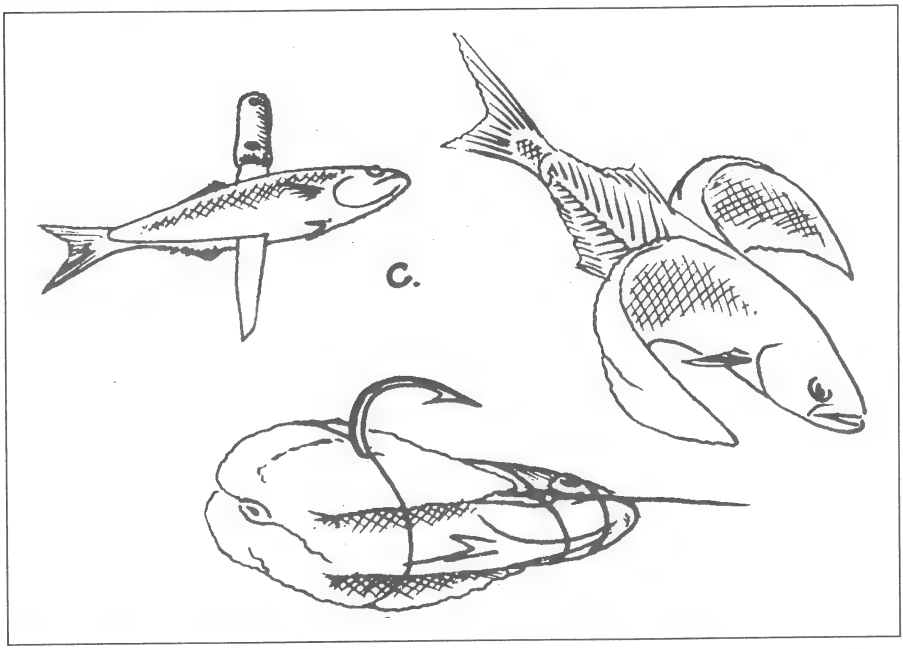
BAITS



As any experienced angler knows, bait presentation is one of the most important factors is fishing and applies to big fish angling more than any other for only shrewd fish grow big. As a rule the angler who pays attention to detail when making up a bait is the one who has the most success.

These two baits are straight forward and provided that they are tied onto the hook as shown and small cuts are made where the tie-on cord passes around the top and bottom edges of the fish, they will stand up well to hard casting and the attention of "peckers".



This is one of the most effective way of presenting a shark bait but is not recommended where there are hordes of small fish about as it exposes the soft inner sides of the fillet. First the bait-fish is filleted half-way up either side but the fillets are left intact. They are then folded forward towards the head and tied on in that position while the exposed back-bone is cut off and discarded.

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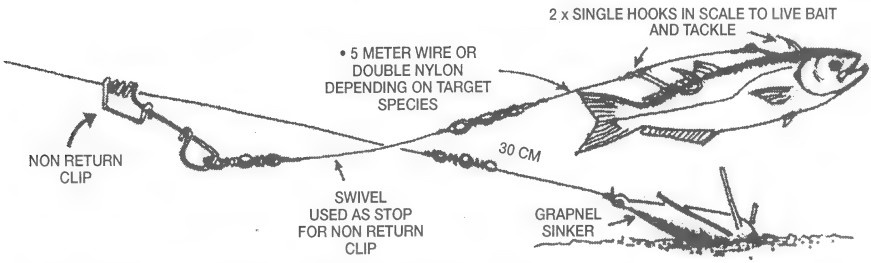
LIVE BAIT SLIDE CLIP

Getting a live bait out beyond the 50 meter mark, and keeping it there has always been a big problem for beach & rock anglers. Recently however an invention called the non return clip has made things much simpler in this regard. Here's how it works: The clip (see illustration) is a wire twisted into a spiral that the fishing line can be wound around until it runs through the tube formed by the spiral. The stem of the clip to which the trace & live bait are attached point forward at a 45° angle so that when the live bait swims towards the sinker the clip slides smoothly along the line behind it with no drag at all but should the live bait turn around and swim towards the beach the 45° wire causes the spiral of wire around the line to tilt at an angle, kinking the line and not allowing the clip to move back but immediately it turns & swims seaward, the spiral tube is free to run along the line again towards the sinker. In actual fishing situation the sinker with the 30 cm of heavy duty nylon and stop ring is cast out the desired distance and allowed to settle into the sand then the line between the rod tip & sinker is kept tight while the non return clip with trace & bait attached is twisted onto the line and with the rod tip held high, is allowed to slide down the line and into the water where the swimming live bait, assisted by the back & forth surge of the water will, after a few minutes reach the ring which will stop the clip from sliding any further.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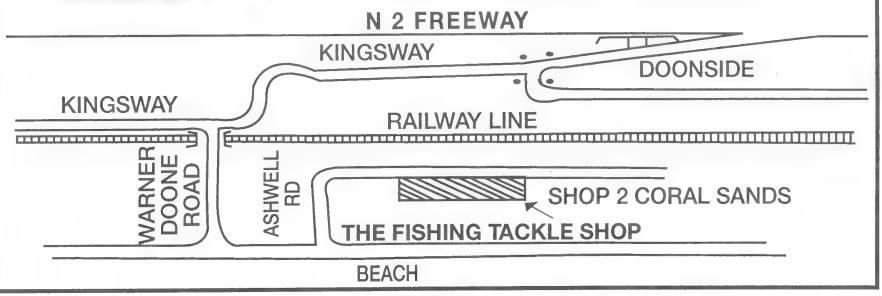
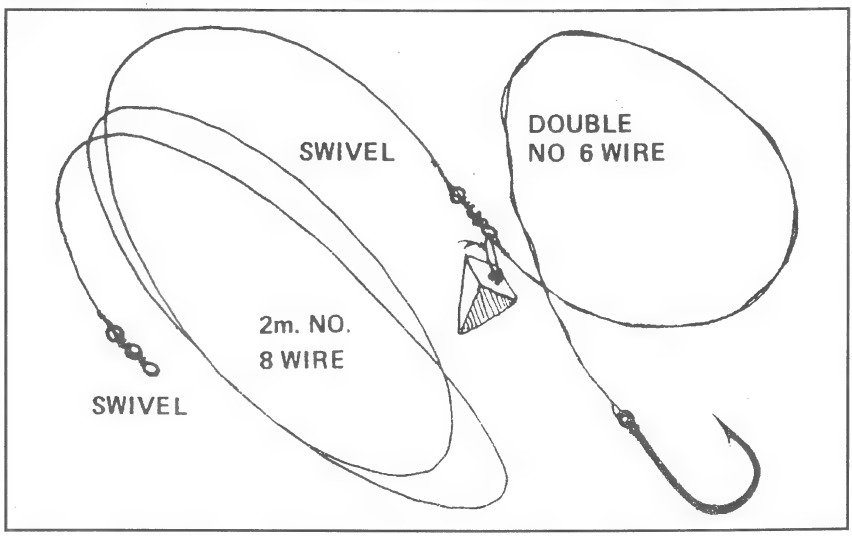
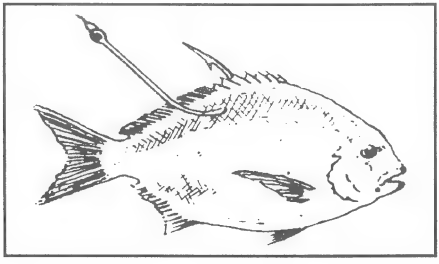


FISHING FROM ROCKS AND BEACHES



Fishing from rocks and beaches using ground or live-bait on a slightly modified version of normal surf tackle can be a very effective method for shark and skate fishing providing that the right venue is chosen. Although big fish will often move into extremely shallow water, they prefer to have a deep water channel close by so that they can find their way back to their natural environment quickly should the situation warrant it. They normally move close in-shore at high tide during early morning or late afternoon, especially when the water is discoloured and the weather is over-cast. Some spots however, come into their own tide because it is only then that it is possible to fish from outlying rocks from where it is possible to cast into deep water.



LIVE BAIT FISHING:

Live-bait fishing for shark is similar to that method used for garrick and salmon. However, the fish in this case tend to be much larger and it is not unusual to see a small shark of 2 kgs. or more being used as bait. When live-baiting for garrick or cob it is normal procedure to use a sinker to anchor the bait fish in the spot where it has been cast. In the case of the bigger baits used in shark fishing it is

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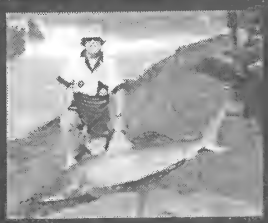

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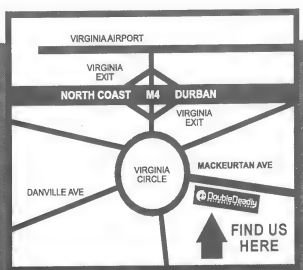


not possible to cast it out and if were, it would need a few kilos of lead to keep it in position. The best method is to find an out-going rip-current which is usually recognizable by the darker colour of the water and the flattening effect it has on the waves and the absence or scarcity of foam. These usually start a few metres from a steep beach and run out at an angle towards the back line. A live-bait that is too big to cast out can be dropped into the back-wash as close as possible to an outgoing rip and providing that it is in a good condition, it will waste no time in heading out to deep water with the aid of the current.

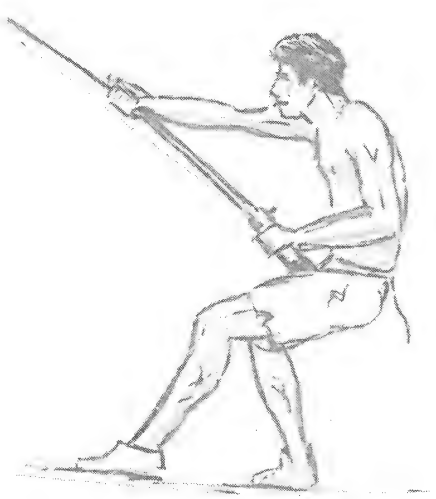
This method is best practised from a sandy beach or where there are not too many out-lying reefs where your line may be fouled if the bait suddenly decided to swim parallel to beach instead of straight out.

One or two hooks may be used in the live-bait. The end one hooked under the skin just behind the head and the next should be on the rear of the dorsal fin. It should be deep enough to take the strain of dragging the weight of the trace and line through the water but be careful to keep clear of the back-bone as this will kill the fish.

Once the obstacle of coaxing live-bait out into deep water has been over-come, the chances of success are good for the vibrations set up by a live fish are definitely more attractive to a shark than the scent of a dead fish or part thereof. This is obvious to anyone who has done any spearfishing, for while a fish is being subdued, sharks often become highly excited immediately the spearfisherman kills the fish. Even though he causes more blood to be spilt in the water, the sharks normally calm down considerably.

STRIKING & FIGHTING THE FISH

The first indication of a pick-up is usually signalled to the angler by sudden activity of the baitfish, followed soon by a heavy pull and occasional shaking as the shark siezes its victim and manoeuvres it into position for swallowing. During this time it will continue to swim and the line should be given with only enough pressure to prevent an over-wind, or the slack wound in, depending whether the shark is moving away or coming in towards the beach. After waiting at least ten seconds for the bait to be swallowed, pressure is then brought to bear on the line until it is taut and the hook is driven home by a series of sold strikes by the angler. If monafilament line is being used then the rod tip should be pointing almost directly at the shark when the first strike is made.



This is because of the terrific amount of stretch in this line, especially when there is over a hundred metres of it already out.

Depending on the size and species of the shark hooked, the fight may last from a few minutes to a few hours. In the event of it being a "big un" it will take long runs against maximum pressure and then swing up and down, using currents and making the angler work for every inch of line. During a sustained run, the left hand which is gripping the rod should be moved up the butt until the arm is straight and the strain is taken by the shoulder and the back muscles. When there is a lot of line out and the fish is not taking any more, the easiest method to use in line recovery is to walk slowly backwards, keeping maximum pressure on the nylon but the rod held high so that a sudden rush will not take you unaware and cause a smash up. Having walked back as far as you can, or as far as practical, move forward still with your rod held high and when most of the stretch is out of the nylon start winding as you walk until you reach the point at which you started. Sometimes it may be necessary to have a companion hold the line clear of rocks if there is depression in the terrain where you walk backwards and forward. Continue to recover by this method until the fish is within 150 metres, when the more orthodox method of line recovery can be used pulling back on the rod until it is vertical, then dropping the rod towards the fish again and at the same time winding a few turns of the line back to the reel.

GAFFING

When you decide that the fish is ready to be gaffed, try to bring it into a place free from underwater obstructions where your line could be cut if it makes a final run. Try to use the waves to your advantage, making your maximum effort when the swell pushes the shark shore-wards. Sometimes it will be necessary for those gaffing the fish to take hold of the trace in certain circumstances, but they should keep in mind the fact that although the trace wire may be three times stronger than the line, the important thing is whether the hook is embedded solidly or not and although shark flesh is tougher than most edible fish there is a limit to what it will take. Another thing is that should you have been careless about making up your trace, and left sharp ends of wire protuding at the joints it is doubtful whether the same people will be eager to help you gaff your next fish after having their hands cut to the bone on the first. If fishing from high rocks a good strong rope and a sharp grappling hook are indispensable aids. When fishing in the afternoon, remember to take a torch along as a large shark will often keep one going until well after dark.

Never try to remove a hook from a shark by putting your hand down its throat no matter how dead you consider it to be, for apart from the risk of a bite there is also the danger of infection from an accidental cut on their bacteria infested teeth.

When making up a gaff, make the handle of strong cane at least 4 metres in length and remember that the barbless hook must be bound to the THICK end it and not the thin end as many people are inclined to do.

It is a good idea to have round headed screws placed every few feet along the handle on the same side of the hook so that you will know which way it is facing when gaffing at night or in foam.

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KITE FISHING

One of the most effective methods of taking sharks is with the aid of a kite which is used to tow the bait from the shore through the surf and out into the deep water. This type of angling is dependant on favourable offshore wind conditions though on certain parts of our coast especially the Transkei, it is possible to send out a kite bait in almost any wind except on the rare occasion that it blows directly onshore. The reason for this being that this section of the coast has many deep water bays with rocky headlands stretching far out into the ocean so it is possible to find somewhere with the wind at your back. On the Natal Coast which is not so well endowed with bays and long headlands most kite fishing is done during the cold months of the year when the off-shore land breezes blow for a few hours on most mornings.

Although there are many variations to this form of angling, they all fall into one or the other of two methods. One is where two rods are used, one is direct to the kite and the other has the trace and bait attached in the normal way. In this method the kite is flown out for 50 to a 100 metres and then the line of the fishing rod is fastened to the kite line by cotton about 10 metres from the bait. Both lines are then played out so that the kite can tow the bait the desired distance from shore; then a sharp strike from the angler will break the cotton connecting the two lines so the bait can sink to the bottom and the kite may be retrieved. One advantage of this is that the kite can be used by several anglers who send out their baits in turn and once the bait is out, it is no longer dependant on the whims of the changing wind.

In the other method only one rod is used, the kite is flown out for sixty metres or so then the end of the line is attached to the main fishing line 10 metres or more about the bait. The kite is then allowed to take the bait out to deep water in exactly the same manner as the first method described but this time the kite stays out and the bait is fished near the surface which is sometimes very effective but should the wind drop or change direction then one has problems. The advantages are – the movement of the kite imparts a rise and fall action to the bait which attracts the attention of the sharks quicker than one which is motionless. By varying the distance above the bait that the kite line is attached to one can make sure that the main fishing line is held above the water in a heavy surf or clear of obstructions in rocky areas.

Outfits for kite fishing may vary greatly, especially the rods which may be anything from two to five metres but the common denominator in all such outfits is the reel, whether a Scarborough or geared reel is used it must hold a prodigious amount of line, for in most instances the bait is sent at least two to three hundreds metres offshore and there must still be enough line left to play a big fish which may take another four to five hundred metres in its first run.

1. Mount two 10/0 single hooks onto No. 17 tracewire, one piece 8 cms, long than other 15 cms. Twist a loop on the free end so they can be clipped onto a heavy snap swivel.
2. Make a bait needle from a 38 cms. bicycle spoke by sharpening one end to a point and on the other form a loop open at its base.

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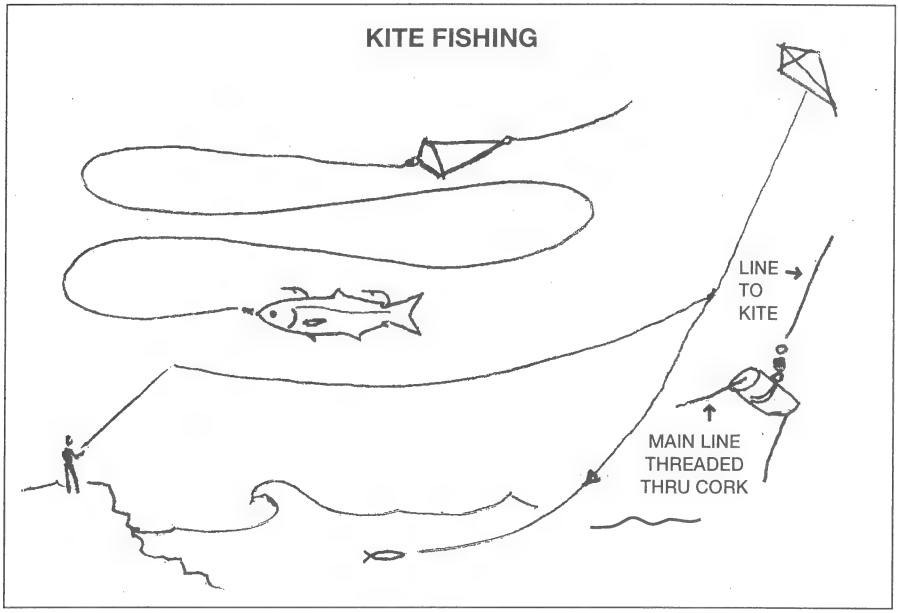
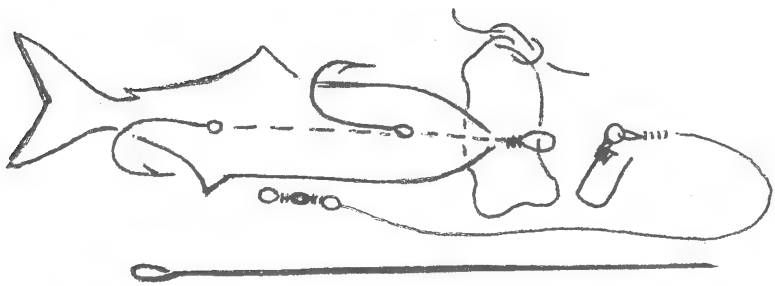


KITE BAIT



3. Place the loop of the short trace over the loop of the bait needle. Push the point of the bait needle into the fishes' side 13 cms from its nose and out its mouth, now pull until the trace loop protrudes out of its mouth, unhook the needle and thread the longer trace through, this time sharting about 20 cms. back from the nose.

When you have the loops of both traces protruding just beyond the bait fishes' nose, thread some stout cord through the top of the nose and out under the lower jaw, this can be done with the needle again. This is threaded through the trace loops and tied firmly, thereby keeping the fishes' mouth closed and preventing it slipping down the traces and burying the hooks. Now clip both trace loops on a heavy duty snap swivel which in turn is attached to 4 metres of No. 14 wire with a heavy swivel on the other end.

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ZULULAND AND NATAL

Lying as it does on the edge of the warm coral waters of Mozambique, the Zululand area is inhabited mainly by fish of the tropics. The larger varieties include brindle bass, potato bass, skates, rays, sand sharks, sawfish and a great variety of sharks such as blackfin, zambezi, tiger, white tips as well as ridge-back greys and ragged tooth. Skate, rays, sandies and sawfish are taken at high tide on the edge of the channels and sandbars, while at low tide when the sea is calm many anglers wade onto the sandbanks and cast into the deeper water beyond which is the hunting water of the sharks.

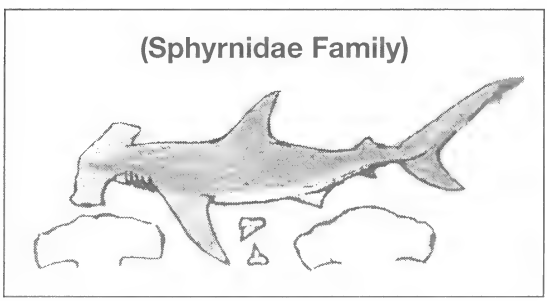
This is mainly an area of long stretches of sand and flat shallow reef which is exposed at low tide, occasionally broken of by rocky out-crops such as Island Rock lying to the north of Sodwana Bay which is an excellent area for shark fishing. This area however is only accessable by four wheel drive vehicles or a beach buggy, which applies to most points north of Cape Vidal. St. Lucia mouth is sometimes alive with sharks and the occasional brindle bass is also taken. To the south Mtunzini is an excellent spot for sharks and skates.

The Tugela River is the northern boundary of Natal. Between here and Port Edward which is the southern boundary, the surf fishing does not alter to any great extent except that some of the species mentioned above such as the sandsharks and many of the rays are less abundant as one travels southwards and others like the white tip shark and sawfish disappear entirely from the scene.

Good spots for big fish include Tinley Manor rocks – both north and south, Thompsons Bay which is excellent for big sandies and beaches north of the Umgeni River mouth as well as the mole on the south bank of the river are all favourite spots for the angler after big stuff. In Durban, South Pier which runs out to sea for about eight hundred metres from the Bluff on the southern side of the harbour mouth, is a regular venue for shark fishermen.

On the south coast where kite fishing is very popular such spots as Umtentweni the Margate fishing platforms, Orange Rocks, Pulpit Rock at Munster and Port Edward all yield their share of big fish.

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS



It is the opinion of most experienced shark anglers that pound for pound the hammerhead shark, especially the bronze specie is certainly the hardest fighter regularly taken from our waters. It has often been described as an ugly monster because of its strangely shaped head, but I must disagree with this. It is a perfectly hydrodynamically designed creature and to see it moving carefully through its own element is to see poetry of motion

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The two species found in our waters are the bronze (Sphyrna lewini) and the common (Sphyrna zygaena). The bronze is the larger of the two species, reaching a weight of 135 kilos. The common hammerhead averages 10 to 20 kilograms and are present off the South African coast throughout the year. Moving south during the warm season, they are extremely plentiful off the Cape coast as far south as Mossel Bay during the summer months.

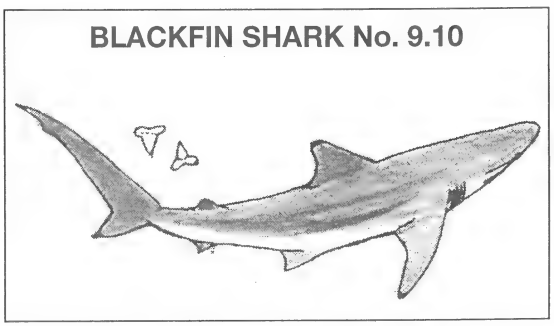
Each year between the second week in November and the end of December, the South Pier of Durban experiences a run of large bronze hammerheads seldom weighing less than 75 kilos or more than 140 kilos, all of which are males. They are invariably caught on the north side of the pier and it is usually the baits nearest the base of the pier which are picked up first, so obviously they are travelling from north to south perhaps heading for some rendezvous off the coast to the south where they meet up with the females of the species. During the first three months of the year, many large bronze hammerheads are observed about the Aliwal Shoal which is an undersea reef 3 kilometres off-shore, about 64 kilometres south of Durban.

In this area they do not seem to travel in any particular direction and apparently remain in the area until May when they disappear with the coming of winter.

Since hammerheads normally swim near the surface, kite fishing where the bait is kept on or near the surface, gives excellent results with these fish. For the same reason anglers using ground bait often have a piece of styrofoam (used in the manufacture of surf-boards) inside their baits so that although the sinker anchors the trace in position, the bait is buoyant enough to lift off the bottom and hovers a few feet above the sinker. This method is only practical where there is little or no current.

Favourite stands for hammerheads are Chakas Rock, Mapelane, Benghazi, Green Point, Umzumbe, Port Edward, Munster, Port St. Johns, Hamlins Rock, Umsikaba, Emboyti, Laplatana, Mazeppa Bay, Gonubi Mouth and the Break Waters at Port Elizabeth and East London.

BLACKFIN SHARK



This is the most popular of the smaller sharks taken by anglers on our coast, it is a good fighter and specimens often give an outstanding aerial display as they leap repeatedly from the water to a height of 4 metres or more. While so engaged the trace sometimes becomes entangled.

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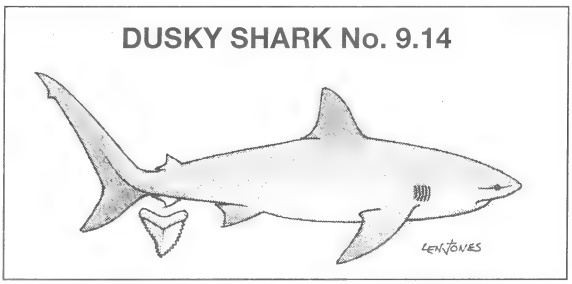
Unless it is sufficiently long the line is easily cut on the paper like skin. Weighing from 5 to over 120 kgs. they are at home in all depths of water, often hunting their prey among the life of breakers, especially when shoals of shad or sardine are present. It is quite common for these fast, active sharks to take a spoon intended for garrick or cuda and many an angler has thought himself connected to a record breaker of one of the species especially when the shark was of a size large enough to strip every inch of nylon from his spinning reel and take the lot without showing itself. On occasions it becomes impossible to catch a salmon at night when a pack of these sharks move into an area and take every live-bait or big fillet that hits the water. If the shoal concerned happens to comprise of big fish of 45 kilos and more, then the majority of those hooked escape by taking all the line.

DUSKY SHARK

One of the most common of the big sharks which inhabit our waters, it is known as the lazy grey because of sometimes disappointing fight which they give on rod and line. However, it does not do to generalise and I have seen some exciting tussels with members of this



species which grows to 300 kgs. in weight. It is a much slimmer fish than the zambezi with which it is often confused and has one feature which makes it easily identifiable when landed, there is a well defined ridge running along the back between the first and second dorsal fins.

This shark is found in all depths of water but normally prefers deeper water than other members of the Carcharhinus family such as the blackfin and zambezi. Although often taken from the surf, the majority of ridge-back greys are taken on kite baits from piers and break-waters where water in excess of 10 metres in depth can be reached, they prefer a large bait of fish, skate or even a chunk of shark.

The shark is known from all waters off the east coast of South Africa and is caught throughout the year provided the temperature does not drop below 18c. Almost all the large ridge back greys taken off the Natal coast are females, many of which have just given birth and at this time are usually very hungry but hardly in a fit condition to give an outstanding account of themselves when hooked and it is probably these specimens which have earned the reputation for the species of being poor fighters.

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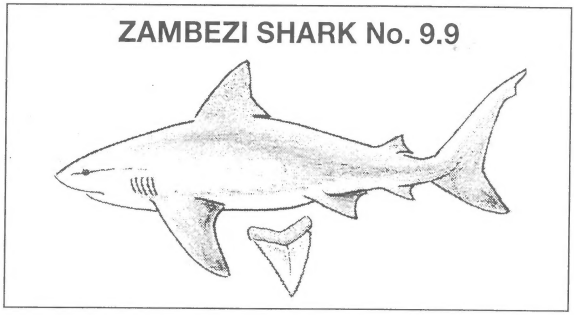
ZAMBEZI SHARKS

Well known from the warmer waters off the Natal and Zululand coast, this shark has been caught as far south as Port Elizabeth during summer months when the warm waters of the Mozambique current move close in-shore along our coast line.

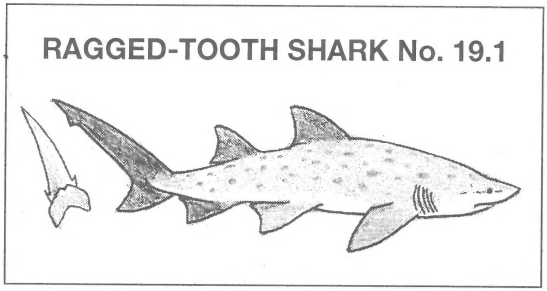


The zambezi shark is very heavily built, its snout and head being exceptionally broad and tapering very fast towards the tail, giving a tad-pole like appearance when viewed from the top. It reaches a length of three metres and 180 to 225 kilos in weight and is principally a shallow water species often moving into less than two metres of water during the hours of darkness or over-cast weather. They frequently enter harbours, bays and estuaries and will often travel miles up rivers beyond the influence of the sea, Specimens have been caught in the Zambezi River over 450 kilometres from salt water.

They are usually present when large runs of mullet, grunter and other estuarine fish occur and a live-bait swum out into the channels bordering sandbanks where mullet shoals are seen is very effective especially at night.

They are capable of a stubborn fight, especially when hooked on standard surf gear. This fish is a proven man-eater, On numerous occasions fragments of teeth from Zambezis have been removed from the wounds of shark attack victims and skindivers who have had encounters with this fish in its own domain testify to its aggresive nature.

RAGGED TOOTH SHARK



This aptly named shark is certainly one of the most evil and ferocious looking species in our waters. Its mouth, never completely shut is armed with rows of elongated teeth which are extremely sharp at the tip but which have little or no cutting edge so that they are more suited to tearing than biting. However, as far as humans are concerned, this fish is a rather docile member of the shark family, spending most of the day cruising slowly among the gullies of reefs in fairly shallow water or in caves where they apparently sleep.

They are poor fighters compared with other sharks of similar size and very large specimens have been landed on ordinary surf gear. The only feature of their

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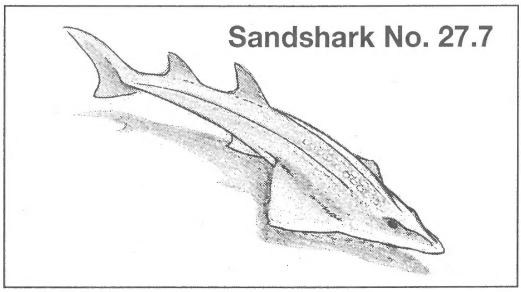
performance which may spell trouble for the angler is that they will often stay very deep down even when allowing themselves to be hauled in easily, with the result that the line and trace is often fouled on the rocks. They feed on practically anything including crabs and crayfish. Where there is one ragged tooth there are normally more, so that when one is landed another bait in the area has an excellent chance of being taken by one of the same shoal.

This shark is very common off the reefs of Zululand.

SANDSHARKS



This powerful bottom feeder has many characteristics of both shark and ray but does not fall into either category and is possibly best described as a cross between the two. In its feeding habits it emulates the rays, preying on crustaceans and molluscs found over sandy areas though it will eat other fish should the opportunity present itself. This has been born out by the fact that they have been known to take live bait intended for cuda a few metres below the surface in nine metres of water. However, it's flat bands of crusher teeth and the position of it's small mouth are certainly not intended for the capture of free swimming fish.

They prefer shallow water seldom moving too far from shore. During the high tide period they often move into the surf zone where they feed along the edge of sand bars, sometimes in only a few metres of water. They are one of the strongest fighting fish taken by surf anglers. Size for size they are only equalled in strength, stamina and speed by the bronze hammerhead. They weigh from 5 to 75 kgs. with the average big fish being in the region of 45 kgs. A specimen of this size will give an excellent account if itself on surf tackle, fighting gamely to the last. At the end of their reel blistering runs they stay close to the bottom and often when being reeling in they dig their pectorals into the sand, making things doubly hard for the angler, though whether this is by accident or design it is hard to say. This habit of digging into the bottom often causes the line to cut into the sand when the fish is in a deep water channel and a high sand bar is between itself and the angler. This will often result in the nylon parting under the extra strain when the fish takes its next run, especially if it takes off parallel to the beach.

The sandy may be taken throughout the year from Zululand beaches but although they have been found as far south as East London it is only a summer migrant to these waters. Sand-sharks will take a variety of baits including fish fillet, crayfish, crab and catfish. The latter bait is one that while used extensively on the Cape coast seems neglected and under estimated especially as a shark bait once north of the Transkei. It has the advantage of being impregnable to the small bait snatchers such as pinkies and karranteen.

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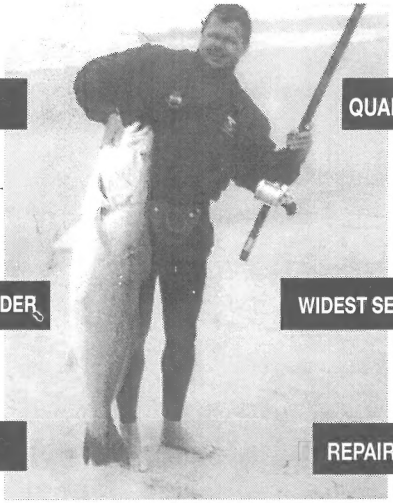

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F2534-247	3.60	12.0	4	6.8 - 9.1	3 - 4oz	7 + TIP
F2534-26	3.60	12.0	4	6.8 - 9.1	3 - 4oz	7 + TIP
F2534-29	3.90	13.0	4	6.8 - 9.1	3 - 4oz	8 + TIP
F2534-30	4.20	14.0	4	9.1 - 15.0	4 - 6oz	8 + TIP
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F2308-23	CT-30L	4.0:1	4	7.0 / 415
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